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ABSTRACT

General advice is offered about measures to take before closing underutilized school buildings. If the building has potential value to the school district, tenant, buyer, or other public agency, specific measures are necessary to protect the building. On the other hand, depending on the size, zoning, location, and age, the building may have no future value to the school district or to any other potential owner. In this case, minimum protective measures are necessary. (Author/MLF)

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SCHOOL MOTHBALLING CHECK LIST

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Here is a School Mothballing Check List that we have prepared for our school district clients and prospective clients.

We hope it will be helpful to you. If you need other advice on how to dispose of under-utilized buildings, please call us.

Regan Joint Enterprises, Inc.

A. BEFORE CLOSING, GENERAL

1. Meet with adjacent homeowners to ask for cooperation, notification of vandalism, etc.
2. Notify Police and Fire Departments that building will be vacant.
3. Stop [illegible] and trash collection service.
4. Inventory, declare disposition and remove:
   a. School records.
   b. Portable valuables: typewriters, calculators, A-V equipment, fire extinguishers, emergency lights, standby power units, etc.
   c. Grounds equipment, especially items containing fuel or oil.
   d. Printing supplies, art supplies, rags and other flammable materials.
   e. Cleaning fluids and lubricants.
   f. Wood, including coal.
   g. Kitchen utensils and equipment.
   h. Linens.
   i. All curtains and white drapes leave the buildings clean.
   j. Maintenance supplies.

k. Furniture, equipment and stored supplies that can be used elsewhere.

5. Sell removable equipment and supplies that are not needed elsewhere.
6. Check all storerooms and closets. They should be empty and clean.
7. Clean out all students' and teachers' lockers, desks, etc.
8. Review insurance policies. Investigate possible premium reductions. Note reduction in value of contents, elimination of students, visitors, teachers and all other staff except occasional custodian.
9. Change locks on all exterior doors. Limit key distribution.

B. SECURE EXTERIOR OPENINGS

Board up building if it can be done without arousing neighborhood opposition.

1. Windows.
2. Doors and door lights.
3. Fire escapes.
4. Areaways.
5. Skylights.
6. Rooftop equipment.

C. PERIODIC CHECKS AFTER CLOSING

1. Have nearby custodian walk around outside of building early each workday morning to check for breakage or forcible entry; check boiler room. Have nearby custodian or Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds enter building and visit all floors and roof every Monday morning.
2. Check grounds once a week. Clean up, mow, care for shrubs and trees as required. Maintain playgrounds as required.

3. Eliminate snow removal, except driveways as required for Fire Department access, and adjacent sidewalks for public safety.
4. After torrential rain or very heavy snow, check basement, roof, top floor, and other known trouble areas.

D. PREVENTING THE BUILDING FROM RUNNING DOWN

If building has potential value to District, tenant, buyer or other public agency then do the following:

1. Leave some heat on to prevent freeze-up. Set thermostats to maintain inside temperature at 50°F. Disconnect all unit ventilator fans; use radiation only.
2. Consider installing intrusion alarm system. If there is one, arrange to keep in service with police or central agency connection.
3. Keep automatic heat and smoke detection systems in service if they are connected to Fire or Police stations, or to a central agency.
4. Put protective lighting, interior and exterior, on time clock control.
5. Disconnect all electric circuits at panels, except those required above, plus corridor lights to permit Police and Fire departments to move about safely. Review with utility to see if outside protective lighting can be provided from street lights, and metering eliminated.
6. Unplug storage batteries, including fire alarm standby.
7. Terminate telephone service, except for lines used to transmit automatic alarm to Police, Fire or central agency.

8. Remove lighting fixtures at or near grade.
9. Pump out and clean sewage ejector pit.
10. Turn off gas unless required for oil burner ignition. Notify utility to stop service. Turn off kitchen pilot lights.
11. Turn off water unless required for heating, sprinklers, lawn care. Notify utility to stop service.
12. Turn off automatic pumps unless required for storm water ejection, etc.
13. Keep fire sprinklers in operation.
14. Maintain water seal on house trap.
15. Turn off fans.
16. Keep fuel tanks filled.

E. LETTING THE BUILDING RUN DOWN

Depending on the size, zoning, location, age, etc., the building may have no future value to the School District or to any other potential owner. In this case, it may be acceptable and economical to permit the building to deteriorate rapidly.

1. Shut off heat completely.
2. Drain all water lines; empty water closets and fixture traps.
3. Shut off water.
4. Terminate electric, gas and telephone service.
5. Stop oil deliveries and terminate service contract. Empty oil tanks for use in other buildings.
6. Fill house trap with non-evaporating anti-freeze.